

Imperium Sine Fine Reversed - Epic Metre and Hebrew Kingship in Revelation 11:15

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Abstract

Revelation 11:15 occupies a structural and theological hinge in John's Apocalypse, yet the verse's sound has rarely entered the discussion. This article argues that the two cola in Rev 11:15c-d can be heard as an approximate dactylic hexameter and that this epic contour is integral to the verse's meaning. After sketching basic assumptions about Greek quantitative metre and Koine phonology, the study scans the verse and shows that the first colon forms a mixed but recognisably hexametric line with a pronounced spondaic core on βασιλεία and κόσμος. The second colon is almost entirely spondaic, yielding a slow, heavy cadence for the claim that "he shall reign for ever and ever." Set against Homeric, Hesiodic and Virgilian uses of hexameter as the metre of foundations and imperial destiny, this pairing places Rev 11:15 within an epic register of origin and legitimacy even as it reverses Rome's imperium sine fine. At the same time, the acclamation's language is deeply indebted to Hebrew and Aramaic kingship traditions (Ex 15:18; Pss 93:1-2, 146:10; Dan 7:14), whose accentual rhythms likewise move from decisive act to everlasting stability. The verse thus emerges as a compact instance of "Hebrew theology in Greek metre": an acoustic transposition in which Israel's confession of YHWH's eternal reign is proclaimed in the very sound-code of Greco-Roman epic.

Keywords: Revelation 11:15, dactylic hexameter, biblical poetics, epic register, counter-imperial rhetoric

1. Introduction

The seventh trumpet of Rev 11:15 has long enjoyed a wide reception as one of the pivotal verses in the eschatological drama of the book. The loud voice in the scene – “*The Kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever*” – has echoed through liturgy, theology, and not least Handel’s *Messiah*. Scholars have traced this acclamation’s roots in Ex, Ps(s), Dan,¹ yet one feature is almost entirely unexplored: the potential role of *metre* at this climactic moment of John’s apocalypse.²

This study contends that Rev 11:15c-d exhibits a discernible hexametric profile. Its two cola emulate the rhythm of Greek dactylic hexameter, the paradigmatic metre of epic poetry. The opening colon advances via dactylic momentum as “the kingdom of the world” yields to that of “our Lord and his Christ”; by contrast, the ensuing colon decelerates into a markedly spondaic cadence, its gravitas resonating with the proclamation that “he shall reign forever and ever.” In the auditory milieu of the era, where epic rhythm served as an aural emblem of origins and legitimacy, such patterning need not be dismissed as merely accidental.³

¹ David E. Aune, *Revelation. II: 6–16*, WBC 52B (Dallas: Word, 1998); G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); R. Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993).

² There are many works on Revelation’s poems, but most of them deal with other factors – such as intertextuality with the Old Testament, symbolism, etc. Even though most of works on Revelation rightly recognize hymns within the text as “poems,” there are not many works on the poetic structure of the hymns in Revelation. For works that deal primarily with the poems/hymns in Revelation, see K.-P. Jöns, *Das Hymnische Evangelium: Untersuchungen zu Aufbau, Funktion und Herkunft der hymnischen Stücke in der Johannesoffenbarung* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1971); S. Graviner, *Revelation’s Hymns: Commentary on the Cosmic Conflict*, LNTS 511 (London: T&T Clark, 2015). To date, no sustained metrical analysis of Rev 11:15 has been undertaken; discussions of form tend to remain at the level of hymnic classification.

³ This claim is situated within the broader auditory culture of the 1st century CE, in which texts were far more often *heard* than silently read. In such an environment, the rhythms of speech, hymn, and epic were culturally resonant and widely intelligible. See Werner H. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic*

At the same time, the content of the acclamation is thoroughly Hebraic. Rev's proclamation of "our Lord and his Christ" echoes the older formulas of divine kingship in Ex 15:18; Pss 93, 146; and Dan 7, which affirm that YHWH's reign is universal and everlasting. John does not abandon this tradition; he translates it. Rev 11:15 takes the theology and its rhythmic logic and re-voices it in the metre of Greek epic. To borrow Ferdinand Hahn's language, the acclamation presupposes a stream of tradition carried by *Traditionsträger*, whose Semitic poetic habits (parallelism and accentual cadence) are not erased but re-voiced — an acoustic transposition in which inherited material is "melted" into a Greco-Roman epic sound-code.⁴

The claim of this study is thus both modest and consequential. I do not suggest that John himself composed as a trained classicist⁵ or that Revelation secretly conceals a long epic poem. I propose instead that Rev 11:15 appropriates an epic-sounding hexametric contour at precisely the point where it proclaims the transfer of sovereignty over "the world." The metre traditionally associated with imperial foundations thus becomes, in performance, the cadence of God's eschatological reign. The argument proceeds in three steps, followed by a final section on theological and rhetorical implications. First, I offer a concise scansion of 11:15c–d and situate its rhythm within the range of hexametric practice in the Greco-Roman world. Second, I juxtapose this material with the stress-based rhythms of key Hebrew and Aramaic kingship texts. Finally, I draw out the theological and political implications of YHWH's everlasting kingdom.

Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983); A. Millard, *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus* (London: A&C Black, 2001); Paul J. Achtemeier, "Omne Verbum Sonat: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity," *JBL* 109, no. 1 (1990): 3–27; Russ Dudrey, "1 John and the Public Reading of Scripture," *Stone Campbell Journal* 6 (2003): 235–55; Brian J. Wright, *Communal Reading in the Time of Jesus: A Window into Early Christian Reading Practices* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017).

⁴ Ferdinand Hahn, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 3., nochmals durchgesehene Auflage, vol. 2, *Die Einheit des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 586–87.

⁵ As Downing mentions, ancient authors did not have to 'get it right' on their own under the threat of the finality of print. We may reasonably assume that this practice also applies to John. F. Gerald Downing, *Doing Things with Words in the First Christian Century*, JSNTSup 200 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 74.

2. Hexameter, Koine Prosody, and Method

The claim that Rev 11:15c-d approximates Greek dactylic hexameter rests on a few basic assumptions about metre and Koine phonology. Classical hexameter organises verse by the quantitative contrast between long (—) and short (U) syllables: each foot consists of either a dactyl (—UU) or a spondee (—),⁶ with the final foot ending in a long or anceps syllable. Syllable weight is traditionally measured in morae, long syllables counted as 2 and short as 1, and longs arising either “by nature (long vowels, diphthongs, circumflex accents)” or “by position,” when a short vowel is followed by two consonants.⁷ Koine Greek undeniably underwent significant phonological changes, including the neutralisation of vowel length and the merger of several diphthongs. Yet, epigraphic and literary evidence indicates that these quantitative distinctions survived sufficiently audible – especially in elevated registers – to support metrical patterning. Diphthongs such as ου, ει, and αι continue to behave as long vowels; position-lengthening is well attested in inscriptions and papyri; and Early Christian verse and quasi-verse compositions preserve recognizable quantitative rhythms. Koine cannot simply be equated with classical phonology, but neither is it metrically inert: it permits what may be called “intuitive” or “approximate” hexameter, a rhythm close enough to classical patterns to be perceived as epic.

A second assumption concerns what counts as legitimate evidence for such patterning. Ancient hexameter tolerates phenomena such as synizesis, correction, and anacrusis and relies heavily on caesura – especially the third-foot caesura – to articulate sense-units and to pace narrative. These devices appear with considerable freedom in non-classical hexameter and in rhythmic prose. Early Christian literature participates in this broader practice. Luke’s preface (Lk 1:1-4) displays periodic prose with recognizable clausulae⁸;

⁶ For scansion symbols: –/U/× denote long/short/indeterminate syllables; | marks foot end, || colon end; D or *da* marks dactyl (—U U), S or *sp* marks spondee (—).

⁷ For more information on classical Greek prosody, see M. L. West, *Greek Metre* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982); W. Sidney Allen, *Vox Graeca: A Guide to the Pronunciation of Classical Greek*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

⁸ See L. Alexander, *The Preface to Luke’s Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context*

Pauline letters contain recurring cadence formulas; the hymnic fragments in Phil 2.6-11⁹ and Col 1.15-20¹⁰ exhibit balanced cola; and texts such as *Od. Sol.* or the *Hymn of the Pearl* (*ATh* 108-13)¹¹ move on the border between prose and quantitative verse. Revelation need not be an outlier in this regard. It belongs to a milieu in which authors could shape key acclamations by means of rhythms, even when they were not composing continuous hexameter poems.

These methodological commitments also delimit the scope of the present argument. The analysis proceeds on three converging tracks: (1) a quantitative reading that treats Rev 11:15 as approximate dactylic hexameter; (2) an accentual reading that identifies a six-ictus epic contour compatible with Koine's transitional phonology; and (3) a comparative reading that sets the Greek rhythm alongside the stress-patterns of Hebrew and Aramaic kingship formulae. These are not competing interpretations but complementary registers of the same acoustic phenomenon. A first-century hearer familiar with both Greco-Roman epic and Jewish liturgical tradition could plausibly hear resonances across these registers. I do not claim that the Seer of Patmos consulted prosodic handbooks, that Revelation as a whole constitutes a continuous poem, or that its Greek conforms to Alexandrian standards of metrical correctness. Nor does the analysis presuppose a perfect preservation of classical vowel length in the first century CE. The suggestion is more restrained: Rev 11:15c-d shows a rhythmic shape sufficiently similar to dactylic hexameter that a historical audience might have perceived it as

in Luke 1.1–4 and Acts 1.1, NTS Monograph Series 78 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁹ M. W. Martin and B. A. Nash have addressed Phil 2:6–11 as a Christ-Hymn comparable to the Greek *hymnos* genre. B. Eckman examines its metrical regularities and proposes a reconstruction of the pre-Pauline hymn underlying the passage. M. W. Martin, and Bryan A. Nash, "Philippians 2:6–11 as Subversive Hymnos: A Study in the Light of Ancient Rhetorical Theory," *JTS* 66, no. 1 (April 2015): 90–138; Barbara Eckman, "A Quantitative Metrical Analysis of the Philippians Hymn," *NTS* 26 (1980): 258–66.

¹⁰ See N. T. Wright, "Poetry and Theology in Colossians 1.15–20," *NTS* 36 (1990): 444–68, yet this paper offers analysis focused mainly on parallelism.

¹¹ Still, old Syriac version of *Hymn of the Pearl* is written isosyllabic poem, each line consists of 12 syllables, and *caesura* divides lines in half, making 6+6. See G. R. S. Mead, *The Hymn of the Robe of Glory*, Echoes from the Gnosis 10 (London: The Theosophical Publishing Society, 1908), 9–10.

belonging to the epic style. In an oral tradition, such recognisability relies more on the general pattern of long and short syllables, the positioning of pauses, and the distinction between dactylic drive and spondaic heaviness. On this basis, section 3 offers a detailed scansion of 11:15c-d, not to prove that John was a technical metrist,¹² but to show how the metre he instinctively deploys reinforces the theological content of the acclamation.

A note on metrical flexibility is in order. To limit non-falsifiable “repairs,” the analysis operates with a capped and pre-declared set of allowances. In practice, the quantitative proposal relies primarily on minimal correction/synzesis where independently plausible and, at most, one anacrustic pickup. Where a stricter quantitative reading would require further adjustments beyond these constraints, Appendix 2 provides an alternative conservative description in stress-based terms (an accentual six-ictus epic contour with a closing cadence). The methodological point is not that Rev 11:15 constitutes a flawless classical hexameter, but that multiple constrained approaches converge on the same macro-profile.

3. Metrical Analysis of Rev 11:15c-d

The proclamation of the seventh trumpet in Rev 11:15 concludes with two distinctly separate cola. The initial (v. 15c) is a finite clause detailing the delegation of power, whereas the subsequent (v. 15d) is a future indicative

¹² Since antiquity, Revelation has often been criticised for solecisms, or “barbarous Greek” (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 7.25), and this criticism has persisted throughout the patristic and modern periods. Yet, it has been reinterpreted as numerous scholars argue that Revelation’s solecisms reflect Semitic rhetorical influence rather than incompetence and may function as intentional stylistic markers. See R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1920); D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 704–5; For objections to the view that the solecisms largely reflect Semitic influence, see L. F. Mot, *Morphological and Syntactical Irregularities in the Book of Revelation: A Greek Hypothesis*, Linguistic Biblical Studies 11 (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2015); For a further perspective that interprets such features as a form of protest, see A. Yarbro Collins, *Crisis & Catharsis: The Power of the Apocalypse* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984).

affirming the enduring quality of that delegation.

11:15c Ἐγένετο ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ κόσμου τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ,

11:15d καὶ βασιλεύσει εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

At the syntactical level, the two-cola transition from a significant event to a lasting result. Prosodically, the initial colon suggests a break after βασιλεία, resulting in two hemistichs:

ἐγένετο ἡ βασιλεία || τοῦ κόσμου τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ.

This is exactly the primary caesural position in Homeric poetry (third-foot masculine *caesura*).¹³ The second colon, in contrast, lacks a significant internal pause; its meaning and rhythm move onward to the phrase εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, which serves as a substantial cadential conclusion. The bipartite nature of Rev 11:15 consequently corresponds with a fundamental epic framework: an initial line where an event occurs beneath a central caesura, succeeded by a secondary line that consolidates the outcome into a unified, rhythmically emphatic statement. This syntactic and prosodic configuration invites a closer metrical reading.

In metrical analysis, the initial colon of 11:15c can be interpreted as a fundamentally typical catalectic hexameter with an anacrustic pickup:

(U) | D | D | - || - | S | D | (cad.) + post-cadential extension

The clause begins with an anacrusis on ἐ-, a familiar phenomenon in narrative openings, so that ἐ-γέ¹⁴-νε-το supplies the first dactyl. The following phrase ἡ βασιλεία inherently produces a second dactyl, with the article ἡ serving as a long syllable and the combination βα-σι delivering two shorts. At

¹³ The term *caesura* is used descriptively rather than prescriptively. The syntactic break aligns with a common caesural position in hexameter, though no claim of deliberate caesural composition is made.

¹⁴ In fact, the syllable γέ- is naturally short, but here the proposal is modest: the opening ἐ- functions as anacrusis, a pickup syllable that allows the metrical ictus to fall on the naturally accented γέ-, thus aligning prosodic stress with lexical accent. This is a familiar phenomenon in oral epic performance, where narrative openings often begin with extrametrical syllables. See West, *Greek Metre*, 35.

the third foot, synizesis is critical: λεί-α in βασιλεία contracts into a single long syllable, and the next τοῦ provides the second long, resulting in a spondee over the point of masculine caesura. The fourth foot κό-σμου is also spondaic, with length by position before –σμ- and a long diphthong in –ου. Only in the fifth foot does the line return to a dactyl (τοῦ κύ-ρι), a classic epic pattern that restores a measure of lightness while foregrounding the divine title κύριος. At the close of the colon the rhythm concentrates into a clear cadential point on Κυρίου, which functions as an audible point of resolution for the transfer statement. What follows — ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ — should not be pressed into a rigid foot-by-foot scheme. It is better understood as a brief christological extension that continues the proclamation after the cadence, expanding “the Lord” into “our Lord and his Christ.” The effect is rhetorically significant: the utterance reaches an epic-sounding resolution and then immediately exceeds it, as the transferred βασιλεία is specified in explicitly messianic terms.

The second colon, 11:15d, is metrically heavier than the other. It can be scanned as:

D | S | S | S | S | Sx

The prefix καὶ βασι- permits a dactyl at the start, yet what comes next is an exceptionally compact sequence of spondees: -λεύσει | εἰς τοὺς | αἰῶ- | -νας τῶν | αἰώνων. The frequent long vowels and diphthongs, combined with position-lengthening, produce a line in which almost every foot is heavy. In quantitative terms, the verse approaches the extreme end of spondaic saturation known from classical epic; in auditory terms, it slows the rhythm almost to a tolling beat. This heavily weighted cadence fits the semantic content of the colon: not the *occurrence* of the event, but the assertion that the reign thus inaugurated will *endure forever and ever*.

This combination of a mixed, more dactylic line with a solidly spondaic counterpart is familiar to the hexameter tradition. Homeric poetry occasionally utilises notably weighty lines to denote instances of significant narrative importance, where destiny is sealed or divine intention becomes unchangeably evident (e.g., *Il.* 22.362, 23.181). Virgil elaborates on this technique, exploiting prolonged spondaic expansions at key transitions and climactic moments in the *Aeneid* to deepen the atmosphere and indicate the significance of fate. Rev 11:15d stands closer to this latter usage than to Homer’s more sporadic heavy lines. Its nearly unbroken series of longs that creates a

sonorous, almost processional cadence that reinforces the irrevocability of the newly proclaimed reign.

Taken together, the two cola of Rev 11:15 trace a metrical profile that closely approximates classical hexameter. The first colon can be summarised as:

15c D | D | – || – | S | D | Sx

and the second as:

15d D | S | S | S | S | Sx.

The former showcases a narrative shift in a rhythm that blends dactylic motion with a spondaic essence, while the latter expresses the enduring impact of that shift in an almost entirely spondaic line. The contrast between the two is not ornamental. It mirrors the semantic progression from the dynamic transfer of “the kingdom of the world” to “our Lord and his Christ” (15c) to the heavy, durative permanence of divine sovereignty “for ever and ever” (15d). The metre does not merely accompany the proclamation; it itself participates in its meaning.

Table 1 summarises the overall metrical profile of the two cola. A full foot-by-foot scansion is provided in Appendix 1 (Table A1) for readers who wish to see the detailed distribution of longs and shorts. Appendix 2 restates this same ending in conservative stress-based terms; it is offered as a control description rather than as a replacement of the quantitative proposal developed in section 3.

Table 1. Metrical Profile of Rev 11:15c-d

Colon	Greek (incipit)	Pattern	Qualitative description
15c	Ἐγένετο ἡ βασιλεία...	D D - - S D - ^ (cat.)	Mixed line with spondaic core on βασιλεία, κόσμος; Catalectic pause on Κυρίου
15d	καὶ βασιλεύσει...	D S S S S Sx	Nearly fully spondaic, heavy cadential line

4. Epic Register and Imperial Foundations

The recognition that Rev 11:15c-d approximates dactylic hexameter raises an interpretative question of literary register: what does it mean for an early Christian apocalypse to resonate with a metrical form conventionally associated with Greek and Roman epic? The issue is not simply one of technical versification. Hexameter functioned as a cultural signal. To speak in hexameter was to claim participation in stories about origins, destinies, and the establishment of enduring orders.

From at least the late eighth century BCE through late antiquity, dactylic hexameter served as the privileged medium for narrating beginnings — of cities, peoples, genealogies, and divine actions.¹⁵ The metre framed such narratives as belonging to the sphere of foundational events rather than ordinary occurrences. Three literary traditions are especially instructive here. Homeric epic uses hexameter to recount the crises out of which new moral and political configurations emerge: the wrath of Achilles restructures the honour code of the Achaean coalition; the nostos of Odysseus culminates in the restoration of a threatened household and kingdom. Hesiod casts the genealogy of the gods and the ordering the cosmos in hexameter as well, so that the metre becomes a vehicle for mapping the transition from primordial chaos to a stable divine regime. Roman epic, most notably Virgil's *Aeneid*, elevates hexameter into a medium for articulating the foundations of imperial identity: the wanderings of Aeneas and the wars in Italy are narrated as the prehistory of Rome's destiny to rule.¹⁶ Across these corpora, hexameter is less a neutral poetic technology than a cultural code. It announces that what follows

¹⁵ In Homer or Hesiod, Zeus's rule is repeatedly framed in hexametric declarations, even though the gods in hexameter are anthropomorphic in appearance and behavior. James J. Clauss, Martine Cuypers and Ahuvia Kahane, "Hiero's Question: An Introduction," in *The Gods of Greek Hexameter Poetry: From the Archaic Age to Late Antiquity and Beyond*, ed. James J. Clauss, Martine Cuypers, and Ahuvia Kahane (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016), 2.

¹⁶ Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.279-80 reads: *hīs ego nec metās rērum nec tempora pōnō, imperium sine fine dedī*. ("For the Romans I will not limit times or space. Their rule will have no end.") This Jupiter's decree's scansion: D | S | S | S | D | S / D | D | D | S | D | S. In 1.279, *sp* is predominant, whereas 1.280 takes its motion again. Scansion is mine.

concerns the origins and legitimation of a durable order.

Ancient theorists (e.g., Aristoxenus, Hephaestion) and modern scholarship often speak of “foundation narratives” in connection with such texts: stories that recount the origins of a polity, city, or sacred community; that link present structures to an authoritative past; and that project this order into an open-ended future. When such narratives are cast in hexameter, form and function reinforce one another. The metre of beginnings accompanies tales in which gods found cities, assign territories, or bestow dominion that is said to endure. Against this background, the metrical shape of Rev 11:15 is suggestive. The first colon, as the analysis in section 3 has shown, describes the transfer of “the kingdom of the world” into the possession of “our Lord and his Christ” in a line that mixes dactylic motion with a spondaic core. The second colon, almost entirely spondaic, proclaims that “he shall reign forever and ever.” The coupling of an eventive line with a heavily cadenced line of eschatological permanence corresponds closely to the logic of foundation narrative: a decisive act inaugurates a new order whose stability is then affirmed.

The use of a nearly fully spondaic verse for v. 15d is particularly striking in this regard. Classical epic reserves extremely heavy lines for moments where the story settles into a state of achieved or irreversible condition—for the acceptance of fate, the disclosure of divine judgment, or the final establishment of a city or dynasty. The slow, weighty rhythm slows narrative time and lends a sense of finality. Rev 11:15d participates in this poetics. Its accumulation of long syllables produces an acoustic stillness that matches the content of the assertion that God’s reign will endure “into the ages of the ages.” The metre enacts the claim that the newly proclaimed kingship is not provisional but definitive.

At the same time, it would be misleading to suggest that Revelation simply imitates classical epic or that John aspired to compose an epic poem in miniature. The phenomenon at stake is better described as literary appropriation. Jewish and Christian authors in the Hellenistic and Roman periods frequently engaged Greco-Roman forms without surrendering their own theological commitments. Jewish hexameter compositions, such as portions of the *Sibylline Oracles* or the fragments attributed to Theodotus, recast biblical traditions in the very metre of Greek epic. Other works, including Philo and Josephus, adopt elements of Greek rhetorical and philosophical style while preserving a distinctly Jewish narrative and conceptual world. Even within the New Testament, one finds

instances of conscious interaction with Greek poetic material: Paul's citation of Aratus in Ac 17:28 embeds a fragment of a hexametric poem into Christian proclamation.¹⁷ These examples indicate that early Jewish and Christian writers could appropriate the cultural authority of Greek poetic registers while redirecting their theological import.

Within this broader landscape, Rev 11:15 stands out as a concise but potent case of epic appropriation. The acclamation does not expand into a full-blown epic narrative; Revelation remains an apocalypse, not an epic poem. Yet at the very moment when it proclaims the transfer of "the kingdom of the world" and the everlasting reign of God, it does so in a cadence that echoes the metre of Homer and Virgil. The epic register is not an aesthetic flourish but a strategic choice: the canonical metre of foundations is placed in service of a profoundly counter-imperial foundation claim.

The subversive edge of this move becomes clear when one recalls the role of hexameter in Roman imperial ideology. Virgil's *Aeneid* does not merely tell a story of origins; it frames Rome's rule as divinely willed and without end — *imperium sine fine*, "a dominion without limit." In that poem, hexameter underwrites the legitimacy and permanence of Roman power. Revelation redeploys the same metrical code while reversing its ideological direction. Where imperial epic projects the eternity of Rome's dominion, Rev 11:15 declares that "he shall reign for ever and ever," transferring the language of unending sovereignty from empire to the God of Israel and his Christ. The result is not a Christianized epic in the strict sense, but an apocalyptic re-inscription of the epic register: the metre of imperial foundations resounds with the proclamation of YHWH's eschatological reign. Yet this proclamation, as the following section will show, is not only metrically Greek but rhythmically Hebrew. The epic register of Rev 11:15 emerges from the convergence of two acoustic traditions.

¹⁷ F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 384–85.

5. Hebrew Kingship Theology and Its Rhythmic Forms

Building on the metrical profile sketched in section 3 and the epic register described in section 4, this section argues that Rev 11:15c-d voices a profoundly Jewish confession in Greek metre. The metrical form is Greek, but the confession is that of Israel's God. To understand how form and content mutually reinforce each other in Rev 11:15, we must attend to the core motifs and rhythmic habits of Hebrew kingship traditions.

Hebrew kingship theology rests on three interlocking claims. First, YHWH reigns. The basic confession appears in compact formulas such as *יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ* (“YHWH is the king”) and *יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ* (“YHWH will reign”), which anchor divine kingship to God's acts of creation, covenant, redemption, and holiness (e.g., Ps 93:1-2; 99:1-3).¹⁸ Second, YHWH's kingship is universal in scope. Unlike many ancient Near Eastern royal ideologies, which restrict the deity's effective rule to a particular land or people, biblical kingship texts speak of YHWH's reign over “all the earth” and “all nations,” binding heaven and earth into a single domain. Third, YHWH's reign is everlasting. Adverbial phrases such as *לְעוֹלָם* (“for ever”), *לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד* (“for ever and ever”), and their Aramaic analogue *עֲלַם דִּי־לָא יַעֲדָה* (“an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away,” Dan 7:14) provide a stock way of saying that God's kingship is irrevocably permanent. These three motifs – YHWH reigns, YHWH reigns over all, YHWH reigns for ever – form the theological backbone that Rev 11:15 rearticulates.¹⁹

The texts that articulate this theology are not only conceptually rich but also rhythmically marked.²⁰ Ex 15:18 offers perhaps the earliest extant formulation

¹⁸ For the classification of Ps 93; 96–99 as YHWH-mālak or divine kingship psalms, see C. Briggs, and E. Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 2, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960 reprint), 296–301; W. Brueggemann, and William H. Bellinger, *Psalms*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 414–17.

¹⁹ W. Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 495–96.

²⁰ Following descriptions follow the Masoretic accentuation and stress-based accounts of Hebrew verse. See J. L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1981); D. L. Peterson, and K. H. Richards, *Interpreting Hebrew Poetry*

of divine kingship: *יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד*, often felt as a four-beat line that gathers up the narrative of the exodus into a single, emphatic assertion: “YHWH will reign for ever and ever.” The rhythm moves from a simple subject-verb pair to a doubled temporal adverbial, so that the temporal horizon expands even as the line comes to a close. Ps 93:1–2 elaborates this confession into a miniature poem. Masoretic accentuation divides v. 1 into a sequence of short cola in which each unit carries roughly two or three stresses: “YHWH reigns; he is robed in majesty; YHWH is robed, he has girded himself with strength; indeed, the world is established; it shall not be moved.” The repetition of *יְהוָה* and the piling up of predicates create a crescendo that resolves in the final clause “it shall not be moved,” where the rhythm slows, and the last stress falls on the negated verb. In here, the rhythm does not rush; it builds a sense of solidity through short, firm beats and a final, long-vowel conclusion on *אָתָּה*. The phonetic pairings in both v. 1 and 2, especially by gutturals and z-sounds in v. 1, and long ē and ō, reinforce the slow closing cadence. Kingship here sounds like unshakeable stability.

Ps 146:10 functions as a kind of doxological coda for the Psalter’s closing section: *יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְדֹר וָדֹר* (“YHWH will reign forever, your God, O Zion, to all generations”). The accentual contour again moves from a brief subject-verb unit to an extended temporal phrase. The double temporal expression — “for ever ... to all generations” — stretches the horizon of YHWH’s reign from abstract eternity into the concrete succession of human generations. What begins as a theological claim about God’s kingship expands into repeated, lived experience across time. In each of these cases, the rhythmic profile is similar: relatively short cola with two or three stresses, building toward a climactic final position in which words for stability and permanence — “forever,” “shall not be moved,” “to all generations” — receive the strongest accent.

Dan 7 intensifies this pattern in an apocalyptic key. The chapter as a whole transposes the older kingship formulas into a visionary narrative of conflict, judgment, and the transfer of dominion. In Dan 7.14b, dominion is given to “one like a son of man,” and the Aramaic line reads: *שְׁלֹטָנָה שְׁלֹטֵן עָלֵם דִּי־לֹא יַעֲרֶה*

(Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1992); Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques*, 2nd ed. (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986).

ימלכותה די-לא תתהבל (“His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed”). Accentuation and natural sense divide the verse into four units, yielding a 3-3-1-3 beat pattern: an initial three-stress colon (“his dominion is an everlasting dominion”), a second three-stress colon (“which shall not pass away”), a brief one-stress pivot, and a closing three-stress colon (“and his kingdom [is one] that shall not be destroyed”). The interjected one-stress colon functions almost like an extra blow of emphasis before the final affirmation. Semantically, Book of Daniel does what the rhythm suggests: it heightens the older confession by locating God’s eternal reign not simply in creation or cult but in an eschatological act of judgment over the beasts and empires of the world. The “everlasting dominion” is no longer a general attribute of YHWH alone; it is concretised as a kingdom given to the human figure who represents the saints.

Having traced the accentual patterns of Ex 15:18, Ps 93, Ps 146, and Dan 7, we may now ask: how might Rev 11:15 sound if re-voiced in a Semitic idiom? The Delitzsch Hebrew New Testament offers a controlled heuristic. Its rendering of 11:15c-d reads: הַנָּה / וְהוּא יְמִלְךָ // וְהָיָה לְאַדְנֵינוּ וְלִמְשִׁיחֵנוּ / מִמְּלֶכֶת הָעוֹלָם (“the kingdom of the world → to our Lord and his Messiah” // “and he will reign → for ages of ages”). This retroversion is offered not as evidence for a specific Hebrew/Aramaic Vorlage, but as a controlled illustration of how the kingship tradition remains rhythmically legible within Semitic accentual poetics while being re-voiced in Greek.²¹ More significantly, when the Greek text is heard accentually (as proposed in Appendix 2), the same six-stress contour emerges: ἐγένετο / βασιλεία / κόσμου / κυρίου / ἡμῶν / χριστοῦ. The Greek and Hebrew patterns converge on the same rhythmic architecture.

This convergence suggests that Rev 11:15 can be described across multiple rhythmic registers. First, at the level of quantitative contour (Section 3), the proclamation approximates a hexametric movement with a perceptible shift from dactylic propulsion to increased spondaic weight. Second, at the level of accentual phrasing (Appendix 2), it may be heard as a six-ictus epic contour compatible with Koine stress-accent. Third, at the level of Semitic poetics, a 3+3 // 2+2 accentual grouping remains legible in a Semitic retroversion,

²¹ An Aramaic rendering would evoke the Danielic register even more directly: הָנָת מְלִכּוּתָא דִּי / עֲלֵמָא לְמַרְנָא וְלִמְשִׁיחָא; וְהוּא יְמִלְךָ לְעֲלָמִי עֲלָמִין (cf. Dan 2:44; 7:14, 27).

aligning the transfer-clause with a balanced opening and the reign-clause with a tightened cadence. All three readings point toward the same conclusion: the verse can be heard as foundational, enduring, and epic-sounding. Whether heard by a listener trained in Greek quantitative metre, one attuned to Koine stress patterns, or one familiar with Hebrew liturgical rhythms, Rev 11:15 may register as a proclamation of cosmic sovereignty cast framed in a sonic code of permanence. Importantly, the conclusion does not depend on any single scansion detail, but on the stable macro-contrast that persists across these constrained descriptions.

A further question concerns historical plausibility. Is it reasonable to imagine that a Jewish Christian prophet might allow such Hebrew and Aramaic patterns of kingship praise to be “translated” into Greek epic metre? Hellenistic Jewish precedents suggest that it is. Josephus famously claims that Moses’ song in Exodus 15 could be rendered into Greek hexameters (ἐν ἑξαμέτρῳ τόνῳ)²² with no essential loss, effectively portraying Moses as both prophet and, potentially, epic poet.²³ D. L. Gera has shown that the Greek translators of certain Hebrew texts experiment with line-length, clausulae, and even quasi-metrical effects when rendering Hebrew poetry into Greek, playing with ways of mapping Hebrew praise into Greek poetic idioms.²⁴ These examples indicate that the idea of Hebrew theology sounding in Greek metre was not foreign in the period.

Patristic witnesses also reflect an interpretive habit of describing Hebrew poetry in Greek metrical categories. Eusebius reports that the “great song of Moses” and a Davidic psalm were said to be arranged in the “heroic metre,” even as hexameters of sixteen syllables, and that other biblical stichoi were spoken of as trimeters or tetrameters.²⁵ Jerome, in his preface to Job, likewise

²² Josephus, *Ant.* 2.346.

²³ Ibid. 4. 303, 7.305.

²⁴ Deborah Levine Gera, “Translating Hebrew Poetry into Greek Poetry: The Case of Exodus 15,” *BIOSCS* 40 (2007): 107–20. Gera argues that the translator of LXX reshaped the song with attention to balance, rhythm, and euphony, producing Greek that reads as stylized poetry rather than straightforward prose.

²⁵ Eusebius, *Prae. Ev.*, XI.5.7 states: εἶεν δ’ ἂν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἑμμετροὶ ποιήσεις, ὥς ἡ μεγάλη Μώσεως ψδὴ, καὶ τοῦ Δαβὶδ ὁ ριη Ψαλμὸς, τῷ καλουμένῳ παρ’ Ἑλλήσιν ἡρῶν μέτρῳ συντεταγμένοι. Φασὶ γοῦν ἑξάμετρα εἶναι ταῦτα, δι’ ἑκκαίδεκα συλλαβῶν πεποιημένα. Καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ δὲ τὰ παρ’ αὐτοῖς στιχῆρη δι’ ἐπὼν λέγεται τριμέτρων τε καὶ τετραμέτρων κατὰ τὴν

characterizes most of the book (Job 3:3–42:6) as a kind of hexameter composed of dactyls and spondees, ordered by equal “times” rather than by counting syllables.²⁶ Whatever we make of the accuracy of such claims, they show that late antique Jewish-Christian readers could imagine — and at times assert — an aural equivalence between biblical song and Greek quantitative verse.

Moreover, the practice was not only retrospective. Jewish and Christian authors also produced Scripture-based compositions directly in Greek metres: the *Sibylline Oracles* recast biblical eschatology in epic hexameter, and Ezekiel the Tragedian’s *Exagoge* dramatizes the Exodus story in the iambic trimeter of Greek tragedy. Even in Syriac tradition, the *Hymn of the Pearl* (*Acts of Thomas* 108) preserves a highly regular 12-syllable line with a 6+6 caesura, indicating that Semitic liturgical cultures likewise cultivated formal rhythmic templates.²⁷ Finally, the third-century hymn preserved in P.Oxy. XV 1786, with its musical notation, is commonly read as quantitative (often anapaestic), suggesting that quantitative rhythm could persist within Christian worship despite the growing dominance of stress accent in Koine pronunciation.²⁸ In this broader bilingual and bi-metrical milieu, the epic contour of Rev 11:15 becomes historically less surprising.

Against this background, the formal and rhythmic choices in Rev 11:15 can be seen as a particularly concentrated instance of “Hebrew theology in Greek metre.” On the one hand, the theological content of the acclamation is thoroughly Hebraic. Phrases such as “the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ” and “he shall reign for ever and ever” gather up the motifs of YHWH’s reign, universality, and eternity voiced in Ex 15:18, Ps 93, Ps 146, and Dan 7. The final phrase εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων is a natural Greek circumlocution for עַלְמֵי דְיִיָּא לְעוֹלָם וָעַד and עַלְמֵי דְיִיָּא לְעוֹלָם. On the other hand, the formal vehicle is no longer the accentual, parallel bicola and tricola of Hebrew verse but the quantitative rhythm of hexameter. Yet the functional

οἰκείαν αὐτῶν συγκεῖσθαι φωνήν.

²⁶ Jerome, “Preface to the Book of Job,” in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* II, fasc. 6, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 491.

²⁷ G. R. S. Mead, *The Hymn of the Robe of Glory*, 9–10.

²⁸ Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt, eds., *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. 15 (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1922), 21–25.

pattern remains analogous. In Ex 15:18 and Ps 146:10, proclamation moves from a relatively light initial colon (“YHWH will reign”) to a heavier, climactic colon that carries the weight of “for ever.” In Rev 11:15, the first, more mixed line (v. 15c) narrates the transfer of the kingdom, while the nearly fully spondaic second line (v. 15d) carries the weight of “and he shall reign for ever and ever.” The Greek metre thus becomes a formal analogue to the Hebrew rhythm of kingship: both are oriented toward final positions that sonically underline permanence.

Seen this way, Rev 11:15 is not a random convergence of Greek form and biblical content, nor a superficial adornment of theology with borrowed poetic clothing. It is a deliberate or culturally intuitive act of transposition in which Israel’s confession of YHWH’s everlasting reign is allowed to resonate within the epic register of the Mediterranean world. The verse stands at the intersection of two traditions: deeply Jewish in its theology of kingship, unmistakably epic in its sound.

6. Theological and Rhetorical Implications

Modern scholarship increasingly recognises Revelation as participating in a broader spectrum of counter-imperial discourse in the early Christian movement, articulating an alternative vision of sovereignty over against the ideological claims of Rome.²⁹ Within this interpretive framework, Rev 11:15 — analysed metrically in section 3 and located within epic and Hebrew kingship traditions in sections 4–5 — stands out not only for *what* it proclaims, the transfer of kingship to “our Lord and his Christ”, but also for *how* it does so. The metrical observation advanced in this study suggests that resistance to imperial ideology is inscribed not only in the content of John’s visions but also in his adoption — and reversal — of the empire’s own epic metre. By casting the acclamation in an epic-sounding hexametric contour, John adopts the Hellenistic acoustic register normally associated with foundation narratives and imperial self-presentation,

²⁹ On Revelation as counter-imperial rhetoric, see David A. deSilva, *Seeing Things John’s Way* (Louisville: WJK, 2009); J. Diehl, “‘Babylon’: Then, Now and ‘Not Yet’: Anti-Roman Rhetoric in the Book of Revelation,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 11, no. 2 (2013): 168–95.

only to redirect it toward the reign of Israel's God.

Within this perspective, the shift from the comparatively dactylic propulsion of v. 15c to the overwhelmingly spondaic weight of v. 15d functions theologically as well as politically. The metre itself performs the movement from eschatological inauguration to eternal establishment, thereby sonically embodying the core logic of Hebrew kingship theology (event → permanence) even as it subverts Rome's own metrical idiom for narrating imperial destiny. Recognising the hexametric structure of Rev 11:15c-d is thus not a matter of literary curiosity; it opens a window into the theological imagination of Revelation, revealing how form and content cooperate to convey a vision of divine sovereignty that is both deeply grounded in Israel's tradition and provocatively addressed to the Greco-Roman world.

Hexameter was not a neutral poetic form in antiquity. It was the “grand style” of foundational stories – of cities, empires, peoples, and gods. To cast a proclamation in hexameter was to locate it within the cultural register of origins, destinies, and cosmic legitimacy. By the first century CE, the metre had become as much a political medium as a literary one. Virgil's *Aeneid*, commissioned and celebrated in Augustan Rome, articulated an *imperium sine fine*, a world-order whose endurance was secured by Jupiter's decree and whose legitimacy was affirmed by epic form itself. Rev 11:15 consciously inhabits this register but reverses its ideological function. What the *Aeneid* does for Rome's imperial dominion – framing it as divinely grounded and without end — Revelation does, in concentrated form, for the reign of God and the Lamb. The parallel is striking. For Virgil, Rome's sovereignty is projected as “without limit and without end”; for John, the same epic cadence bears the confession that the kingdom of the world, which thought to be ordained by Jupiter without end, has passed to God and his Christ, “and *He* shall reign for ever and ever.” The borrowing of epic form does not signal accommodation to imperial ideology but its rhetorical undoing from within. John's use of metre functions as a kind of literary iconoclasm, chipping away at the cultural aura of Rome's claims and redirecting the hearers' hope toward divine sovereignty and the vindication of the faithful.

If Rev 11:15 is written in hexameter, it was meant to be heard as much as read. In Revelation's original setting, the text would most likely have been performed aloud in congregational gatherings, not silently perused. The metrical shape of the verse thus becomes part of its acoustic performance,

shaping how the proclamation is perceived, felt, and remembered. The more dactylic movement of the opening colon — rapid, forward-driving, narrating a decisive transfer of sovereignty — gives way to the slow, heavily spondaic cadence of the closing colon, in which the words “he shall reign for ever and ever” fall like measured strokes. The contrast between movement and weight, between event and permanence, is not only conceptual but audible. In liturgical terms, the verse functions almost as an aural icon of God’s kingship: a compact doxology whose very rhythm enacts the tension between coming and being, crisis and consummation. Such a structure also enhances memorability. A regular pattern of longs and shorts, once learned, allows the community to recall and reproduce the acclamation with ease. The hexametric form of Rev 11:15c–d thus supports its role as a communal refrain, an acoustic anchor for the churches’ confession of God’s eternal reign.³⁰

Narratively, Rev 11:15 occupies a pivotal position in the book’s architecture. It marks the culmination of the trumpet sequence and, at the same time, anticipates the visions of cosmic conflict and final judgment that follow. The verse gathers up earlier anticipations of divine kingship and projects their fulfilment forward into the concluding chapters. In this respect, its metrical character underscores its structural function. The first, more mixed line corresponds to a moment of transition: the kingdom of the world “has become” the kingdom of God and his Christ. The second, heavily spondaic line sounds like a settling into permanence: “he shall reign for ever and ever.” The two together frame the remaining narrative. On the one hand, the conflict between

³⁰ L. García Ureña argues that Revelation is a written text oriented toward oral performance in communal settings. Lourdes García Ureña, “The Book of Revelation: A Written Text Towards the Oral Performance,” in *Between Orality and Literacy: Communication and Adaptation in Antiquity*, Orality and Literacy in the Ancient World 10, ed. Ruth Scodel (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2014), 310–11; Peter S. Perry likewise describes Revelation as a performative text whose public recitation elicits participation and responses from its audiences. Peter S. Perry, “Biblical Performance Criticism: Survey and Prospects,” *Religions* 10, no. 2 (2019): 117; More broadly, Jan Vansina has shown how poems and formulaic expressions can be transmitted and stabilized through oral memorisation and recitation. Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 16; Taken together, these studies support the view that Revelation’s hymns could have been regularly performed antiphonally in early Christian assemblies, functioning as a means of shaping and sustaining communal identity within the Greco-Roman world in the first century CE. See also B. J. Wright, *Communal Reading*.

the dragon, the beasts, and the Lamb still unfolds in Rev 12–20; on the other, the outcome of that conflict has already been proclaimed in an epic cadence. The proclamation of Rev 11:15 thus functions as an apocalyptic prolepsis; a hinge verse whose rhythm helps to centre the entire narrative on the sovereignty of God.

The final and perhaps most significant implication concerns the relationship between form and theology.³¹ The metrical profile of Rev 11:15c–d suggests that metre can function as a theological medium. The movement from a relatively dynamic, dactylic line to an almost entirely spondaic line is not an ornamental flourish but a formal analogue to Revelation’s eschatological tension between “already” and “not yet.” The first colon voices the inaugurated aspect of God’s reign — an event that has occurred; the second underlines its eschatological completeness and permanence. Moreover, the adoption of a culturally authoritative form like hexameter signals the universality of the message. The reign of God is not confined to Israel’s liturgical language or to the idioms of Jewish apocalyptic discourse. By speaking in the metre of Greek epic, Revelation asserts that God’s sovereignty concerns the entire world — the κόσμος itself — and so may rightly be proclaimed in a form intelligible to that world. In this light, the blending of Hebrew theology and Greek form becomes a theological statement in its own right. It is a literary enactment of what the verse proclaims verbally: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.” Even the sound of the verse participates in this transfer of sovereignty.

Seen in this way, the theological and rhetorical implications of Rev 11:15c–d extend far beyond metrical analysis. The use of hexameter subverts imperial ideology by appropriating the metre of epic for a counter-imperial proclamation, enhances the liturgical and mnemonic power of the declaration, performs and stabilises a crucial narrative transition within Revelation, and functions as a medium in which form and meaning converge. The epic form

³¹ On the notion that literary form carries theological meaning, see Amos Wilder, *Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of Gospel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 89–117; Frank Kermode, *The Genesis of Secrecy: On the Interpretation of Narrative* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 75–99; Ernst R. Wendland, *LiFE-Style Translating: A Workbook for Bible Translators*, 2nd ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2009), 37–60.

of the verse and its confession of God's everlasting reign belong together; each helps to interpret the other.

7. Conclusion

Rev 11:15c-d brings together two worlds of language and sound. The proclamation can be analysed from three complementary perspectives: quantitatively, as an approximate dactylic hexameter with spondaic saturation (Section 3); accentually, as a six-ictus epic contour compatible with Koine's transitional phonology (Appendix 2); and comparatively, as a Greek re-voicing of Hebrew and Aramaic stress patterns that shaped Israel's kingship theology (Section 5). These are not competing interpretations but converging registers of the same acoustic phenomenon. On the one hand, the metrical form is Greek epic; on the other hand, the theological content is thoroughly rooted in the Hebrew and Aramaic traditions of divine kingship, which confess that YHWH reigns, reigns over all, and reigns forever. When these two dimensions converge in the acclamation that "the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever," the result is neither a classicising ornament nor a random stylistic hybrid, but an instance of Hebrew kingship theology voiced in the epic register of the Greco-Roman world.

The metrical profile of the verse embodies this convergence. The first colon, with its mixed but clearly hexametric line, narrates the decisive transfer of sovereignty: "the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ." The second colon, almost entirely spondaic, sounds the slow cadence of permanence: "and he shall reign for ever and ever." In this pairing, the logic of Hebrew kingship praise — the movement from decisive act to abiding stability — is rendered in Greek quantitative rhythm. The movement from a more dynamic, dactylic line to a heavily weighted, spondaic line is not an incidental flourish. It offers a formal analogue to Revelation's eschatological tension between inauguration and consummation, between the crisis of the present and the finality of God's reign.

At the same time, the hexametric cadence of Rev 11:15 participates in Revelation's counter-imperial rhetoric. Hexameter in antiquity was not a

metrically neutral medium. It carried the cultural authority of Homeric, Hesiodic, and Virgilian epic, and in the Roman world, it served as a privileged vehicle for narrating the divine origins and unending destiny of empire. By allowing the proclamation of Rev 11:15 to resonate with this epic soundscape while redirecting its content to “our Lord and his Christ,” John both inhabits and subverts the imperial register. The metre that once underwrote claims of *imperium sine fine* now bears witness to a different and higher sovereignty. Form and content cooperate in this reversal: the epic line has not been baptised so much as turned against its former ideological function.

Finally, the acoustic character of Rev 11:15 invites a reconsideration of how Revelation worked in its original settings and how it might be received today. The verse was intended to be heard in communal performance, its rhythm learned, remembered, and repeated. As a compact doxology at the structural centre of the book, its metrical shape enhances its capacity to anchor communal memory, liturgy, and hope. Hearing the hexameter in Rev 11:15c—d therefore sharpens our sense of Revelation as a text that thinks not only in images and concepts but also in sounds. The proclamation that “the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ” is itself an act of acoustic re-founding: in its very form, it announces that the measure of the world’s story has changed.

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Appendix 1, Table A1. Foot-by-foot scansion of Rev 11.15c-d

Foot	Syllables	Pattern	Quantitative Basis	Notes
11.15c				
(U)	ἐ-	Anacrusic pickup	Short	Treating ἐ- as extrametrical allows the metrical ictus to fall on the naturally accented γέ-, aligning prosodic stress with lexical accent – crucial for oral performance.
1	γέ-νε-το	Tribrach (resolved D)	Short(long?) + short + short	Strict quantity yields UUU; Likely felt as Dactyl via stress accent (without requiring a strict quantity claim)
2	ἡ βα-σι-	D	Long by nature + short + short	Regular dactyl
3	λεία τοῦ	S	Synizesis of λεί-α → /lja/ (long) + long	Masculine caesura inside Requires synizesis; typical of Koine tendencies
4	κό-σμου	S	Long by position + diphthong(long)	Heavy spondee
5	τοῦ Κυ-ρί	D	Diphthong(long) + short + short	Homeric cadence
6	ου	L	Catalectic ending (Spondaic onset) ³²	Cadential resolution on Κυρίου; brief christological extension follows.
Coda	ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ		Post-cadential expansion	Following the cadential resolution on Κυρίου, the phrase ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ continues as a short christological expansion. The point is not to “save” the line by unlimited repairs, but to describe a cadence followed by a brief continuation in proclamation.
11.15d: Holospondaic character strongly supported by natural quantity				
Foot	Syllables	Pattern	Quantitative Basis	Notes
1	καὶ βα-σι-	D	Long by nature	Transitional dactyl

³² Instead of forcing a final spondee by splitting the word ἡμῶν, it is structurally sounder to read the line as catalectic, resolving firmly on the final long syllable of Κυρίου. This metrical truncation (catalexis) creates an acoustic ‘gap’ that is immediately filled by the theological expansion of the titles.

			+ short + short	Echoing 11.15c's opening
2	λεύ-σει	S	Double diphthongs	weak pause may fall after this foot
3	εις τοὺς	S	Double diphthongs	continuous weight slows tempo, mirroring semantic shift to "forever."
4	αἰ-ῶ-	S	Diphthong + long by nature	Creates sustained acoustic heaviness
5	-νας τῶν	S	Long by position + long by nature	
6	αἰ-ώ-νων.	Sx	Diphthong + long by nature (x2)	Canonical hexametric close; repetition of αἰών audibly enacts eternity.

Appendix 2. Alternative Reading: Accentual Six-Ictus Epic Contour

This alternative scansion is offered with full awareness of the transitional character of Koine Greek phonology. Accordingly, this appendix is provided as a methodological sensitivity test, not as a rival thesis. As prosodic salience increasingly shifted from classical quantity to stress and phrasing, Rev 11:15 may be heard not as a strictly quantitative hexameter but as an epic contour at the level of accentual grouping and macro-rhythm. This reading is proposed under explicit constraints (i.e., minimal and pre-declared allowances and a capped number of adjustments) and is intended as a listener-oriented account of how oral performance could render the proclamation rhythmically "epic." In this sense, theological prominence is reflected in the distribution of rhythmic weight, without requiring the claim of a fully controlled classical line.

11:15c (six-ictus contour): ἐγένετο / βασιλεία / κόσμου / κυρίου / ἡμῶν / χριστοῦ (αὐτοῦ as a light tail).

11:15d (closing cadence): καὶ βασιλεύσει / εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας / τῶν αἰώνων.

This accentual pattern converges with the Hebrew stress pattern identified in §5. The Delitzsch retroversion exhibits the same rhythmic architecture: A-colon with six stress positions (3+3: וְלִמְשִׁיחַ // לְאַדְנִינִי) and B-colon with four stresses (2+2: וְעוֹלָמִי עוֹלָמִים // וְהוּא יְמִלֶּה). As a result, whether analysed quantitatively (section 3), accentually (here), or through Semitic stress (section 5), the verse exhibits the same epic contour.